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COMMERCIAL CABLE COMPANY

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October 9, 1961

MEMORANDUM: Background talk with David Ormsby-Gore.

This morning I spent 45 minutes with David Ormsby-Gore, new British Ambassador to Washington. He put no restrictions on what he told me, but I suspect that many his remarks were not for attribution.

Ormsby-Gore does not view the Kennedy-Gromyko talks quite so negatively as some of the press reports. Both sides are still maneuvering for position, and it is understandable that the Russians will be as tough as possible before a negotiation. He thinks, however, that both sides have now accepted the point that negotiations are necessary.

It has been difficult for the West to keep its negotiating position intact without giving it away (the standard British complaint). Some people -- meaning U.S. Senators -- have done too much talking about particular conditions.

But de facto recognition of East Germany is necessary. Fears of a shock to the German people on this point are "rubbish" -- an Adenauer bargaining ploy to give as little as possible. The Germans know what is ahead. If there were to be a long period of reverses and economic trouble, then the situation might change and the Germans might doubt the West. But they now know that their prosperity depends upon the Western Alliance, and talk of German neutralism is -- he said it again -- "rubbish."

Is something beyond the Berlin issue involved? O-G thinks there might be some possibility of an arms control zone. His views, he said, were personal (but he has had a lot to do with the discussions). It might be possible to set up a ground inspection zone on a basis of latitude and longitude, so that it would include a bit of Holland and France as well as territory behind the iron curtain and thus not just be limited to Germany. The immediate objective ought to be to see that no additional armaments are brought in. It might be possible to couple this with a larger aerial inspection zone. Then, if it worked, there would be the possibility of reducing arms. O-G would not start with a ban on nuclear weapons in the area, but might work toward it. The Russians have a legitimate interest in making sure that the Germans could not suddenly overpower American guards and expropriate American nuclear weapons; and both sides have an interest in confining nuclear weapons to those who now possess them.

The real danger of war is hardly that someone in Moscow or Washington will push a button. It is rather that some local dispute along the border will get out of hand. Thus the check on conventional forces -- and the inspection so as to guard against any conventional buildup -- would be reassuring to both sides.

The eloquence and detail of all this made me think that there may be something more than mere personal opinion involved.

What sort of problems exist between the U.S. and Britain? Well, we don't always see eye to eye on colonialism. O-G feels that many in

Not to be
Telegraphed.

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the U.S. would like to see independence for all colonies in 1962 (I think he exaggerates). The problem is more complicated than that. He implied that there had been a good bit of U.S. governmental pressure on Britain about Africa.

Yet O-G recognized that there sometimes must be a divergence of opinion. He personally thought that it would have been right for the U.S. to vote for the colonial resolution in the U.N. last December, and tried to persuade the British government of this from New York. But the people in London got "panicky" and Macmillan intervened with Eisenhower. Actually, on balance, a U.S. vote for the resolution probably would have been in the interests of the West.

Certainly when there is no hope held out for self-government, as in Angola, then the West must take a stand. Lord Home's trip to Portugal (roundly criticized by the Laborites last week) was intended partly to try to bring pressure on Portugal to modify her position, and partly to explain why Britain could not support her oldest ally and felt it necessary to abstain.

But when there are divergences of policy between Britain and the U.S., they ought to be planned divergences so that each country knows the reasons for the other's course.

Does O-G think there has been excessive pressure on the Common Market from the U.S.? Not at all. It was unfortunate that Macmillan's visit to the U.S. coincided with his own decision, reached after the most agonizing of political and economic reappraisals over a three-year period, that Britain should apply for entry. It was known that the Kennedy Administration, as Eisenhower Administration before it, was broadly sympathetic to British membership. But there was no pressure from the U.S. O-G denied categorically the charge made by Clive H Jenkins, a Commie-line delegate to the Labor conference (and unrefuted there) that the U.S. had told Macmillan: no support for Britain's borrowing from the International Monetary Fund unless Britain applies to the Common Market.

Robert H. Estabrook

Addendum from Sir William Hailey, editor of The Times: The appointment of Iain Macleod, former Colonial Secretary, as chairman of the Conservative Party is genuinely designed to strengthen the party machinery. Macleod has been criticized by the Tory right wing for too liberal an approach on colonial matters, but that is not the reason. Macleod has had a lot of past experience in the party, and he is needed to strengthen it for a new election. Hailey views him as a future Prime Minister in perhaps five years. If a change were to come now, the new PM probably would be Butler. Everyone concedes that Butler has been too heavily loaded. But Hailey does not trust him, thinks him "too clever" and that this had marred him publicly. Hailey's opinion of Selwyn Lloyd is unprintable. He speaks though, of ~~Thatcher~~, thinks ~~she~~ was proved right in his resignation as Chancellor three years ago, and thinks him making a substantial comeback.